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2018 session
27 July 2017–26 July 2018
Special meeting on "Towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all" (*continued*)

Summary record of the 33rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 23 May 2018, at 3 p.m.

President: Ms. Chatardova ..... (Czechia)

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18-08290 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Interactive dialogue on "Strengthening cooperation for sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies"

1. **Mr. Steven** (Senior Fellow and Associate Director at New York University's Center on International Cooperation), moderator, said that inclusion was a core theme of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda itself, with its vision for an open, tolerant and socially inclusive world, was the product of a participatory process in which the views of almost 10 million people had been solicited. World leaders had emphasized that implementation of the Agenda would require the strong participation of all, and they had identified children, women and youth as agents of change. They had furthermore promised that the Sustainable Development Goals would provide a platform to channel the activist capacities of women and youth into the creation of a better world. Several Goals contained inclusiveness targets, namely: to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all (target 10.2); to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (target 16.7); and to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels (target 5.5).

2. The Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies comprised a group of States, international organizations and other partners, convened by the Governments of Brazil, Sierra Leone and Switzerland, to transform the Sustainable Development Goal targets for peace, justice and inclusion into an agenda for action. In that regard, the group had recently published a road map which set out a strategy for inclusion at the political, social and economic levels and contained practical recommendations, emphasizing the need to assess models of participation in different contexts. It stressed the need for strategies to deepen citizen-led governance, enhance civic participation and promote representation in institutions. The road map called for investment in programmes to demonstrate how communities could participate in policy development. It advocated women's leadership, particularly in crisis settings, and it asked for increased opportunities for youth in activism. Finally, it called for investment in civic education on sustainable development and the protection and enhancement of civic space.

3. **Mr. Gilmour** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), panellist, said that a vibrant and free civil society was necessary to ensure that all voices, not only those of experts, were heard. Inclusivity was important for holding to account those who were supposed to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, as Governments did not have a monopoly on wisdom.

4. It was increasingly understood that a human rights-based approach was necessary for combating inequality, exclusion and discrimination in the achievement of the Goals. National efforts to achieve the Goals in places such as Costa Rica had yielded useful lessons; there, the United Nations system had supported the Government in establishing a national pact for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda that had involved academia, the press, women, trade unions and vulnerable groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, migrants and people of African descent.

5. Civil society participation in the high-level political forum on sustainable development should be increased and civil society organizations should take part in the preparation of voluntary national reports on progress made towards achieving the Goals at the country level. Creative ideas could also be drawn from the human rights sphere. For example, the universal periodic review, an important exercise for every Member State, could be a useful model both for the voluntary national reviews and for progress reports on the Goals. Reviews involving intensive consultations with civil society in the preparation of States' reports were helpful for fostering dialogue, not only with Governments and State institutions but also with diverse civil society sectors. They also helped to monitor progress.

6. An obstacle to civil society participation at the United Nations was that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) needed consultative status with the Council and, regrettably, the obstacles to obtaining that status had increased over time. Applications from NGOs were sometimes deferred for years for seemingly arbitrary reasons.

7. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provided technical assistance on a range of issues that could provide lessons for the achievement of the Goals and help Governments to ensure the rights of their peoples to political and civic participation and the right to information. In Indonesia, for example, the Office had supported the passage of a bill on the rights of persons with disabilities and in Iraq it had helped to draft an important anti-discrimination law for the inclusion of ethnic and religious minorities. In Bolivia, it had supported the implementation of a national action plan against racism. In Tanzania, it had developed technical assistance in the drafting of a constitution and a law on

access to information. In Malawi, it had facilitated a multi-stakeholder national forum for dialogue on business and human rights.

8. While those efforts were of course useful, they took place in a context of increasing restrictions on civil society. He was particularly concerned by the increasing trend of reprisals against individuals for cooperating with the United Nations, ranging from travel bans and refusal of medical treatment to imprisonment, torture and death. Criminalization and delegitimization were other common means of undermining civil society. Individuals were also sometimes targeted for being unpatriotic, anti-family or anti-religion in smear campaigns aimed at suppressing civil society.

9. At the morning meeting, the Deputy Secretary-General had made an important statement regarding the need to end barriers to inclusivity and ensure that sustainable development was rooted in respect for and promotion of human rights. The plans put forward at the high-level political forum to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals needed to expand public understanding of the Goals and to include the voices of the most vulnerable.

10. **Mr. Chungong** (Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union), panellist, said that parliaments played a key role in promoting good governance. In their ideal forms, parliaments were representative of society and examples of the partnerships that existed among various segments of society. In the current global climate characterized by hypercompetitive environments and a lack of trust in Governments, the importance of cooperation and partnerships to the 2030 Agenda could not be overemphasized.

11. Effective partnerships brought multiple actors together around a common cause, such as the 2030 Agenda. The role of parliamentarians was very relevant to that Agenda, as they were supposed to integrate the interests of wider societies, an endeavour that required ongoing dialogue among all elements of society, including marginalized groups. In that context, the issue of hierarchies within partnerships should not be ignored. Partnerships were sometimes misconstrued to mean that all partners were on an equal footing, but the Inter-Parliamentary Union believed that Governments had a primary role in forging the policies that governed societies, and that parliaments must hold Governments to their commitments. Parliaments should work on behalf of everyone, irrespective of their wealth or ethnic origin, and should forge laws in line with international commitments on human rights.

12. In recent years, Governments had retreated from their responsibility to regulate society and had instead embraced economic liberalization, deregulation and privatization, a course of action that would not lead to strong partnerships. Parliaments and Governments must therefore work together to restore balance and undertake robust action to create an environment conducive to sustainable development. There was also a need for more proactive social action so that all were included. Although civil society had a strong role to play in organizing people and articulating goals, relations between Governments and civil society often remained fraught with suspicion. Governments should take steps to rectify that situation.

13. The private sector also had a role to play in partnerships, especially as it was called on to help to finance the 2030 Agenda. More robust engagement with the private sector was needed to foster inclusive and resilient societies. It was also important to ensure that private sector activities were not damaging to the environment and that goods and services were beneficial for society and consistent with the 2030 Agenda.

14. As a major representative institution of Government, parliaments needed to make efforts to bring all components of society together. In their practices and procedures, parliaments should forge partnerships with civil society and the private sector and allow those partnerships to inform their work. However, they were not always able to carry out their designated role because, in many jurisdictions, they were not fit for purpose and lacked the skills and knowledge required for building a resilient society. For that reason, other stakeholders should do their part to empower parliaments by helping to provide those skills.

15. **Ms. Molina Niño** (Chief Executive Officer, BRAVA Investments, and 2018 New York City and State's Corporate Social Responsibility Diversity Honoree for exceptional leadership in educating women entrepreneurs), panellist, said her company invested in businesses that benefited women. While other private investment funds also claimed to focus on women, the mission of BRAVA Investments was more expansive because it did not focus merely on women founders. Venture capitalists were unduly concerned with who occupied the executive or board positions in a company but such matters of representation were not the most pressing and it was more important to fund projects that would help women as a class. A company that focused solely on funding for women entrepreneurs, for example, might refuse to hear the business pitch of a man who had discovered the cure for breast cancer, even though the results of his research would greatly improve the lives of women. Her company also de-emphasized the role of female founders because it was concerned with large-scale investment, and it was impossible to

invest billions of dollars in projects that were exclusively women-owned.

16. As an unapologetically for-profit enterprise, her company used growth as the main criterion when selecting sectors for investment. Having ascertained which of the top 10 high-growth sectors internationally had the highest proportion of women consumers and employees, it had identified consumer products, health care and education as the key sectors.

17. Her company also prioritized long-term investment strategies. While most other investment funds required a return on investments after one to five years, a longer-term strategy allowed for more flexibility, which was conducive to the flourishing of public-private partnerships. By contrast, many other venture capital funds were overly concerned with short-term exits. Those companies also followed a "spray and pray" strategy, whereby investors injected funds into a wide range of projects on the assumption that the vast majority of them would fail while the remaining 1 per cent would be successful. However, that was not a wise strategy for a company that was concerned with benefiting women, because women did not recover easily from bankruptcy.

18. BRAVA Investments was interested in identifying the source of the problems faced by women. While it was true that only 2 per cent of venture capital was invested in women-owned businesses, the larger systemic problem was that very few women were ready to start a business in the first place. In many cases, they did not have the professional or social networks that would, for example, enable them to receive free legal advice or borrow funds from wealthy friends and family. In some cases they did not even have their own funds or savings accounts. As a result, women's business activities were often confined to microbusinesses that would never significantly expand.

19. **Mr. Rákos** (Head of Business Development and Special Projects at D21), panellist, said that he designed processes and services that supported public participation, particularly at the municipal and regional levels. Public participation processes for both Governments and citizens had to be made secure. It was easy to design a just, equal and accessible process for a city that benefited all stakeholders. If citizens were disengaged, that was likely the fault of the process, but if the process was well-designed and civic engagement was nevertheless low, that meant that civic education in schools was poor. Experts who focused on technological and offline solutions, such as public meetings for participatory budgeting and urban planning processes, could see first-hand that civic education had been largely ineffective and that citizens were unprepared to engage in participatory processes. Another main contributor to the success of the process was the community's trust, which could take years to be regained once lost.

20. Many tools and methodologies available for participatory processes had not been put to effective use. A lack of money was not the reason, however, as funding those processes at the municipal and regional levels was inexpensive. For example, processes to improve civic education in cities could be done within six months for only 100,000 dollars. The reason that tools and methodologies went unused was that most clients were not aware of the gaps in their knowledge. Most mayors and municipal officials were not familiar with the concept of representative samples and had no background in interpreting demographic data, and those shortcomings were a barrier to developing an understanding of their communities. As public participation was a multidisciplinary and complex subject, experts needed to have an understanding of sociology, urban planning, communications and the best practices of management consulting companies. Otherwise they would not be able to design a sound process.

21. His organization welcomed international and national action to boost public participation. Governments and international organizations must help to institutionalize the process, but they should not be in control of it.

22. **Mr. Meja** (Coordinator at Reality of Aid Africa Network), panellist, said that inclusive partnerships were essential for resilient and inclusive societies. Governments must identify factors that impeded inclusivity in order to unlock the potential for civil society and the private sector to play a vital role in development, and they must design frameworks that captured the potential contributions of both. In that regard, legal obstacles to inclusivity should be tackled. For instance, the Constitution of Kenya contained a public participation requirement, which meant that processes established without such participation were not legally valid. Political factors also hindered public participation. Governments should therefore change, or address, rhetoric that hampered the participation of parliaments, the private sector and civil society. It was also necessary to overcome institutional impediments and bureaucracy. Systems in which Governments were the ultimate source of wisdom and resources were not conducive to inclusive partnerships. Inclusive partnerships should be promoted and practised at the country level, especially through carefully structured multi-stakeholder dialogues, one of various instruments,

methodologies and tools that could be used at the national level to foster inclusive partnerships.

23. Even more important than the right tools, however, was the creation of enabling conditions — both for inclusive partnerships and, in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, for democratic ownership. Mechanisms were needed to mobilize and value the contributions of communities on the ground towards the achievement of country priorities under the 2030 Agenda. Civil society and parliament must contribute to policy formulation, implementation and evaluation.

24. To strengthen cooperation, accountability and transparency were prerequisites. While Governments did not like to admit to mistakes, citizens tended to appreciate honest communication from them and accept that they were not perfect. Such transparency engaged citizens, preparing them for the painful moments that implementation of the 2030 Agenda would inevitably entail and helping them to understand what could realistically be achieved at the national level. In that context, NGOs and the private sector should be encouraged to provide input on what was working, in addition to inputs on the voluntary national reviews that Governments submitted. Supportive public institutions that created an enabling environment, in particular for civil society organizations, were essential to facilitate such non-governmental contributions. Government hostility towards particular groups, or legal impediments to their participation, must be addressed, through legal reforms and the adoption of new perspectives on engagement.

25. **Ms. O'Dwyer** (Observer for the Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul) said that her organization, which had approximately 16,000 members in 94 countries, focused on reducing poverty and marginalization and believed that inclusion at the grass roots level was vital in all stages of discussions, policymaking and programme development. A 2017 survey on voluntary national reviews, conducted by the task force of the NGO Committee on Social Development, had revealed low levels of awareness of the existence of the reviews. She therefore proposed establishing a hotline to enable all people to provide input into the voluntary national reviews.

26. As the last significant international data on homelessness had been collected in 2005, countries should make a greater commitment to collecting such data.

27. Investment in women's country leadership was also needed. While few female national leaders currently held office, women had valuable perspectives to offer, particularly on issues that directly affected them such as maternity care and domestic violence.

28. In the context of inclusion, the United Nations could create forums for people living on under a $1.25 a day; such meetings, especially if they included people from the North and the South, would shine a light on a range of major issues.

29. Lastly, it was difficult for NGOs to obtain consultative status with the Council and even those granted such status often still had problems accessing United Nations Headquarters, especially during the main session of the General Assembly when their participation was most important. Any efforts to boost NGO participation would therefore be welcome.

30. **Ms. Oliveira Sobota** (Observer for Brazil) said that participation was key for achieving not only Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies, but also the 2030 Agenda as a whole. While different countries had their own models for civil society participation, those organizations were increasingly connected at the global level and were contributing to a more unified international approach by sharing their experiences. Recent best practices in participative public policymaking and implementation in Brazil involved inclusive national councils, some of which had been established by the Constitution to monitor policies in such areas as health, education and women, and some of which had been established on an ad hoc basis to engage the population at large with a view to influencing policy formulation. To make policymaking even more participative, civil society should take the lead by developing mechanisms that ensured its own participation, rather than having the Government dictate inclusive models in a formal, top-down way.

31. Encouragingly, new social movements related to justice and security were emerging in Brazil in response to the high rates of homicide, which particularly affected young people living in the suburbs, Afro-Brazilian youth and women. Those movements would play an important part in achieving the 2030 Agenda. As the moderator had already indicated, the Governments of Brazil, Sierra Leone and Switzerland were contributing to the development of a road map to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16, with the support of New York University. The road map was an ongoing, open exercise and all interested parties were invited to participate in the project.

32. **Ms. Kim** Junhee (Republic of Korea) said that transparent, accountable and participatory governance would support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, substantial participation

required infrastructure and Governments must make data more widely available so that citizens could engage in decision-making processes. Owing to the technical nature of many government discussions, citizens were unlikely to participate in setting priorities or resource allocation. In order to play a more active role, people needed to be empowered to audit and verify the details of public policies.

33. **Mr. Meja** (Coordinator at Reality of Aid Africa Network) said that the profile of voluntary national reviews needed to be raised and that people must participate in the reporting process in order to be aware of, and committed to, addressing the problems outlined therein. For that reason, the Reality of Aid Africa Network was encouraging Governments to establish participatory processes for the preparation of their national reports through dialogue at the national and local levels. As public access to data was important, Governments should enact legislation that strengthened data availability.

34. **Mr. Rákos** (Head of Business Development and Special Projects at D21) said that understanding what participation at different levels of government or institutions entailed was problematic. For example, citizen participation in a health system differed from citizen participation in the management of a municipality. It was therefore important to define those differences and to recognize the inherent complexities of the various systems.

35. Even when Governments were transparent and had pure and honest intentions, citizens at times still failed to engage with them. That could perhaps be explained by the fact that governments at all levels had not yet started to treat citizens as customers. The private sector had long ago realized the importance of studying customers and focusing on their experience. Governments should follow that example and carefully consider human nature, and their citizens' experience, in order to design processes that would elicit engagement.

36. **Ms. Molina Niño** (Chief Executive Officer, BRAVA Investments, and 2018 New York City and State's Corporate Social Responsibility Diversity Honoree for exceptional leadership in educating women entrepreneurs) said that it was useful to adopt a fresh point of view. For example, rather than seeing the homeless and young people as marginalized groups, from a long-term perspective they could equally be seen as undervalued assets in whom it made great sense to invest. While inclusivity meant including traditionally excluded groups such as women, the homeless and people of colour, it also involved those who might otherwise wash their hands of problems. Her strategy for improving women's lives could be described as the "you broke it, you fix it" approach. In other words, men must be held to account and take joint ownership of the process, not as allies, but as stakeholders.

37. **Mr. Chungong** (Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union) said that voluntary national reviews could be made more effective through replication of the models used for universal periodic reviews and the reviews submitted in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, under which a multi-stakeholder approach was taken at the country level. Voluntary national reviews should not be considered the sole property of the governmental agencies responsible for implementing the development agenda. Multi-stakeholder national dialogue platforms that included representatives of civil society and parliament should be established to prepare the reviews. In 2017, parliaments had engaged in less than 25 per cent of the voluntary national reviews. As the outcomes of the reviews would fall to parliaments to implement, they must have a sense of ownership and be informed when their countries were up for review.

38. Trust was a prerequisite for partnerships for sustainable development in the context of resilient societies. Governing institutions must view civil society and parliaments as partners, not opponents.

39. Lastly, overrepresentation in government institutions, in addition to the underrepresentation of certain groups, was a problem. A recent study had shown that business interests were highly represented in Latin American government institutions, including parliaments. Marginalized groups such as women, children, indigenous people and persons with disabilities should be included in decision-making at the national level.

40. **Mr. Lebeda** (Observer for Glopolis — Prague Global Policy Institute) said that while trust was an integrating element of resilience and inclusion, only its formal aspects such as transparency, accountability and evidence-based planning tended to be mentioned. There was an equally important informal side to trust which involved softer skills, such as building human relationships, meeting on a regular basis to discuss informal issues and making friends. A large part of the discussion on trust related to informal elements. Best practices or methodologies that could be used to build the informal component of trust were therefore crucial.

Conclusion of the meeting

41. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the participation

of all was critical for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, hence the inclusion of the target on participatory decision-making under Sustainable Development Goal 16. No one sector, constituency or level of government alone had the capacity to meet the immense challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda. Partnerships must therefore be forged between national Government and local government, between public institutions and people, between NGOs and the private sector, and between academia and civil society, among others. Support and follow-up mechanisms must also be established to guarantee the success of those partnerships as a means of implementation to advance the 2030 Agenda.

42. Governments and institutions must begin to work differently by informing, consulting and listening to each other, including by making use of new technologies and platforms. Established practices, such as participatory budgeting, should also be considered and scaled up.

43. The success of the 2030 Agenda depended on the promise to leave no one behind. While the creative solutions that had been discussed during the course of the meeting offered much hope for the future, it was important to embed the engagement and participation of all into permanent and far-reaching structures and institutional frameworks.

44. The participation of all must be viewed as a critical asset that not only enriched discussions but also made it possible to benefit from localized knowledge, to adapt responses to needs and catalyse creative solutions, thereby supporting the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

45. Communication and outreach were also vital. More effective ways should be found to communicate the challenges the world was facing and how those would be addressed by achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

46. Lastly, the engagement of all also meant the responsibility of all to create strong and responsive governments and institutions at all levels. To that end, stakeholder consultation and engagement must be enhanced and groups must work together in a coherent and mutually reinforcing way.

47. **The President**, summing up, said that the deliberations had resulted in key messages that would support sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through the participation of all. There was a consensus that new technologies had the potential to significantly improve participation. However, *the proper resources* must be made available at the local level to ensure the engagement of the most vulnerable, including those without Internet access. The private sector could play a role in improving Internet access and connectivity. To that end, there had been many calls for Governments to take the lead in creating more space for the participation of all in governance by promoting the use of online platforms, including existing social media platforms.

48. Local governments could strengthen inclusion through participatory budgeting, crowd-sourcing, consensus-building and communication with the community. Partnerships and participation at the local level could build momentum on key issues, leading to institutional changes such as legislative reform.

49. Although Governments were primarily responsible for implementing the 2030 Agenda, the importance of multiple actors' involvement had been highlighted. Academia was increasingly partnering with the public sector and policymakers to strengthen data collection and make data more user-friendly so that it could be used to help influence better public policy decisions. However, more remained to be done to improve data collection and accessibility.

50. A vibrant and actively engaged civil society was also crucial in achieving the participation of all, and in promoting and monitoring progress of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Further ideas were needed to enhance civil society engagement. In addition, parliaments played an important part in bringing together all sectors of society; obstacles such as insufficient resources, skills and knowledge must be overcome in order to further enhance their role.

51. Lastly, in order to combat exclusion and discrimination and realize the 2030 Agenda, it had been underlined that sustainability must be based on human rights and respect for everyone's right to development.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.

United Nations E/2018/SR.34

Economic and Social Council

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2018 session
27 July 2017–26 July 2018
Second coordination and management meeting

Summary record of the 34th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 12 June 2018, at 10 a.m.

President: Ms. King (Vice-President) ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

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(f) Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

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18-09643 (E)

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(c) Statistics (E/2018/24)

1. **Mr. Mwangi Chege** (Director General of the National Bureau of Statistics of Kenya), Chair of the Statistical Commission, speaking via video link from Kenya, introduced the report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-ninth session (E/2018/24), summarizing the outcomes of the session and outlining the work undertaken to implement the decisions made and plans for the months ahead.

2. For 70 years, the Commission had worked to make data comparable around the world, with government experts on statistics uniting to develop a common language and serve the global community with their technical knowledge and expertise. After having agreed in 2017 on the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 71/313), the Commission had focused in 2018 on the need for further methodological development for some of the new indicators, the dimensions and categories of data disaggregation and the data flows for global reporting.

3. The Commission had agreed that the main concern was capacity-building at the country level to meet the data demands required to fully implement the 2030 Agenda and monitor progress towards the achievement of its Goals, namely, high-quality, accurate, open, timely and sufficiently disaggregated data and statistics. Significant efforts were needed to strengthen data collection and statistical capacity in order to achieve the Goals and reach those left the furthest behind first.

4. The report contained cross-cutting decisions on establishing a financing framework for statistics and data, statistical organization, open data, big data and the integration of statistical and geospatial information, as well as decisions on national accounts, environmental-economic accounting, agricultural and rural statistics, refugee statistics and disability statistics, among other topics.

5. In particular, the Commission had welcomed the recognition of the importance of data in the context of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and had committed to revising recommendations on statistics for international migration. The Bureau had been engaged in negotiations to advise on the statistical aspects of the proposed draft of the global compact on migration, and had delivered recommendations on objective 1, on the collection and utilization of accurate and disaggregated data. It had called for capacity-building efforts to strengthen national statistics on international migration and coordinated efforts on migration data and statistics, while building on existing initiatives and mechanisms.

6. Given that the Commission had acknowledged the importance of contributing to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, as requested in resolution 71/313, the Bureau and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda appreciated that its programme included discussion among policymakers, statisticians and other stakeholders on the report of the Secretary-General on the work on the review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/CN.3/2018/3), as well as on data, statistics and statistical capacity-building needs.

7. The Commission had also discussed the need to strengthen coordination among the various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, to make statistical work more visible at the political level, especially in the context of the data for the 2030 Agenda, and the need to establish a position of United Nations chief statistician.

8. **Mr. Gonzalez Peña** (Observer for Cuba), highlighting the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, urged the Group to continue to work on the global indicator framework, which was the result of a process of consultation that had taken place in a broad, inclusive and transparent manner. The framework was an important starting point towards the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and its Goals and targets, and its indicators required ongoing work. The policies, development levels, priorities and differing realities of each country must be respected; the central role of the national statistical offices must be safeguarded as sources of official data in preparing national follow-up reports on the targets and goals of the Agenda; transparent methodologies must be used and high-quality data obtained on a timely, verifiable and reliable basis; and statistical capacity, of particular importance for developing countries, must be strengthened. In some

cases, the indicators still did not cover the many aspects necessary to achieve a goal.

9. In particular, more work was needed on indicator 3.5.2, which was extremely restrictive and not well adapted to target 3.5 and, as the only existing indicator, was insufficient for measuring the scope of the target. The current formulation appeared to be a skewed version of the one used by the World Health Organization (WHO) in its global monitoring framework for non-communicable diseases with regard to the harmful use of alcohol. Per capita consumption as the only indicator was not sufficient, either for differentiating between moderate versus harmful patterns of consumption or for reflecting — and hence treating — consumption outside the established legal age limits. Morbidity and mortality figures were also required.

10. The primacy of WHO and its governing bodies in establishing international health norms, standards and objectives for the indicator should not be ignored and, at the same time, Member State autonomy in the adoption of appropriate, holistic policies to address the issue of harmful consumption should not be limited. Cuba therefore requested that indicator 3.5.2 should be subject to a more detailed and comprehensive examination by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-first session in 2020.

11. The global indicator framework was essential to enabling the accurate measurement of future progress made towards achieving the Goals and their targets; not correcting its limitations could impair the proper implementation of the ambitious commitments made under the 2030 Agenda. Cuba encouraged the realization of the agreed changes aimed at creating a more just and equitable international order and could be counted on to support the process.

Action on decision contained in the report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-ninth session (E/2018/24)

12. **The President** drew attention to the draft decision contained in chapter I, section A, of the report.

Section A

Draft decision: Report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-ninth session and the provisional agenda and dates for the fiftieth session of the Commission

13. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(c) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2018/53 and E/2018/L.11)

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(j) Women and development

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions (*continued*)

(a) Advancement of women (E/2018/27 and A/73/38)

14. **Ms. Byrne Nason** (Ireland), Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women for its sixty-second session, reporting on the outcome of that session, said that every effort had been made to ensure that the Commission took full advantage of all of its working methods, thus improving the context for its work and enhancing the impact of its results. The session had offered opportunities for ministers to engage directly and share experiences, lessons learned and recommended action on the way forward, while stakeholders had participated in enriching and memorable interactive dialogues.

15. The Commission had addressed the priority theme "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls", focusing not only on issues specific to rural women and girls, but also on those shared by all women, everywhere. A robust agreement had been reached, highlighting the urgency of empowering and supporting those who needed it most and who had been left behind for too long.

16. The Commission had worked very hard to reach consensus. Its agreed conclusions represented concrete measures to overcome persistent inequalities and lift rural women and girls out of poverty, ensure their rights and well-being and build resilience, offering a clear road map for steps that Governments, civil society, women's groups and other stakeholders should take to support the realization of women's rights and address their needs and highlighting policies and actions to be undertaken in three key areas: strengthening the critical normative, legal and policy frameworks that often defined the lives of rural women and girls, and not always positively; implementing economic and social policies so that all rural women and girls were empowered in a way that allowed them to reach and realize their full potential; and

strengthening their collective voice to ensure that they took their rightful place in leadership in decision-making.

17. In the agreed conclusions, emphasis was placed on the importance of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and a gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, building on and drawing strong linkages to Sustainable Development Goal 5 and all its targets. Actions were also extensively aligned with the Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2018, as well as with many other Goals, thereby providing important input for the work of the Economic and Social Council and of the forum itself and its theme, "From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities".

18. The Commission had achieved high visibility and political support, through the participation of numerous high-level government representatives. Stakeholders had the opportunity for rich deliberations, including with representatives of civil society organizations, rural women's and girls' organizations, grassroots organizations, human rights treaty bodies, national human rights institutions, United Nations system entities, the media and the functional commissions of the Council.

19. Building on its past work, the Commission reviewed its 2003 conclusions on the theme "Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women". Member States presented lessons learned and best practices in implementation, acknowledging that the digital age was rapidly transforming not only many aspects of economic, social and political life, but also gender-specific challenges and opportunities. Two interactive panel discussions were held, on innovative data approaches for measuring progress on gender equality and women's empowerment and the role of rural women's land rights and land tenure security in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

20. Pursuant to the Council's request to provide a recommendation on how best to utilize the year 2020 to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, the Commission submitted two draft recommendations for action by the Council. The first would entrust the Commission with conducting a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action at its sixty-fourth session in 2020, together with comprehensive preparatory work at the national and regional levels. The second would recommend that a high-level meeting of the General Assembly should be convened in September 2020. The Commission looked forward to the adoption of those recommendations and stood ready to implement them.

21. Noting that the priority theme for the forthcoming session would be "social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls", she pledged that, together with the Bureau and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Commission would work diligently to ensure that it continued to deliver cutting-edge progress for all women and girls, everywhere.

22. **Ms. Mehrotra** (Director of the United Nations System Coordination Division, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2018/53), said that achieving Goal 5 remained a top priority at the highest levels of the United Nations system and was actively promoted by the Secretary-General and his administration. The report presented an assessment of progress in and challenges to coordination efforts to promote that Goal within and throughout the United Nations system, including at the country level, in the final year of reporting under the first phase of the Action Plan (2012–2017).

23. Since its introduction in 2012, the Action Plan had brought about significant and sustained improvement in the performance and accountability of the system with respect to mainstreaming gender equality. In the past year more than 94 per cent of system entities, covering approximately 99 per cent of the budget, had reported on the Action Plan, with progress reported across all 15 performance indicators, in particular in policy and plans; strategic planning; organizational culture; and knowledge generation and communication. Significantly, 54 system entities had gender policies and plans in place, up from 21 entities in 2012, with twice the number of indicators being met among those having a policy than among those without one, thereby revealing that gender equality policies were a key driver of positive change. Nevertheless, persistent areas of structural weakness had precluded the system from

meeting all performance requirements by the 2017 deadline, primarily in the areas related to gender architecture and parity, resource allocation and capacity assessment. Phase 2.0 was designed to build on previous successes and lessons learned and was anchored in the 2030 Agenda. In 2016 and 2017, UN-Women had coordinated an extensive, system-wide consultative and piloting process to update the new Action Plan. The next phase would expand the accountability framework to encompass system-wide reporting on collective results linked to gender-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5.

24. UN-Women and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) had updated the United Nations country team gender equality scorecard to bring global and country-level United Nations accountability systems for gender equality into greater harmonization by aligning the scorecard with the Action Plan 2.0 and placing greater focus on gender equality-related results of the Goals. The updated scorecard had been piloted by 6 country teams in 2017, and another 17 to 20 were expected to do so in 2018. Common reporting on the new scorecard would allow for enhanced accountability and comparability across country teams and for tracking collective progress on the achievement of gender-related United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) outcomes, much as the Action Plan had done across system entities over the previous five years. The updates were opportune given the Secretary-General's ambitious and comprehensive transformation of the United Nations development system to deliver effectively on the promise of the 2030 Agenda.

25. The system continued to help Governments to integrate gender equality into national development and common country programming processes. In 2016, 70 per cent of country teams had undertaken common country analyses, which, under new global minimum standards, were now required to include a rigorous gender analysis and serve as the foundation of joint United Nations action on Goal 5. In addition, 72 per cent of the 58 UNDAFs for which implementation had begun in 2016 and at the beginning of 2017 had specified gender results at the outcome level, thereby reinforcing existing trends that pointed to an increasing proportion of UNDAFs with a stand-alone, gender equality outcome mainstreamed across other outcome areas, and approximately 30 per cent of the 371 joint programmes implemented in 2016 had focused on gender equality, addressing a range of issues. In 2016 and 2017, some 50 country teams had helped Member States to meet their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Nevertheless, redoubled efforts were needed to mainstream gender perspectives in common country programming processes in a more comprehensive and integrated manner, especially in areas of chronic underinvestment for women and girls.

26. While the United Nations system was making progress in achieving greater coherence on gender equality and the empowerment of women, the rate of progress remained uneven and insufficient to deliver effectively on the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system offered strategic opportunities to further enhance coordination, transparency and accountability on gender mainstreaming. UN-Women looked forward to advancing shared commitments and collective responsibilities in that area.

27. She outlined six priority actions aimed at achieving Goal 5. First, sustained leadership and support from the highest levels, including through resident coordinators and senior leaders, was vital for gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes and for supporting the full implementation of gender policies, including the updated Action Plan and scorecard. Second, and with the continued guidance of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, delivering high quality and integrated support for achieving Goal 5 to the next generation of UNDAFs was essential, through both a dedicated gender equality outcome and the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment across all Goal-related outcomes, targets, indicators and budgets. UN-Women stood ready to provide guidance and leadership in that respect. Third, enhancing and mobilizing financing for gender equality and women's empowerment in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda must be a top priority. The development and uptake of a harmonized gender marker would help to better measure and enable the system to address resource deficits, including through UNDAF common budgetary frameworks and thematic and pooled funding for collective action at the country level. Fourth, persistent capacity gaps on gender-mainstreaming, beyond basic mandatory training, must be assessed and addressed. Fifth, the production of gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex and other relevant factors must be prioritized in national statistical systems. Lastly, the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel must be ensured in

order to lead by example and support effective mainstreaming of a gender perspective across the system.

28. Applauding the course of action outlined by the Secretary-General to make zero tolerance a reality, UN-Women viewed draft resolution E/2018/L.11 as a renewed political commitment to gender mainstreaming that provided clear and strong actions for the United Nations system to continue to work collaboratively and to be accountable for accelerating the full and effective mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all policies and programmes of the system, including in the context of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Draft resolution E/2018/L.11: Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

29. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

30. *Draft resolution E/2018/L.11 was adopted.*

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its sixty-second session (E/2018/27)

31. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft resolutions contained in chapter I, sections B and C, of the report.

Section B

Draft resolution I: Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women

Draft resolution II: Twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women

32. *Draft resolutions I and II were adopted.*

Draft resolution III: Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women

33. *A recorded vote was taken on the draft resolution.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Chile, China, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, Guyana, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sudan, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam.

Against:

Canada, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Belgium, Czechia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Republic of Korea, Romania, Spain, Togo.

34. *The draft resolution was adopted by 27 votes to 3, with 13 abstentions.**

35. **Mr. Schettino** (Italy) said that his country attached the utmost importance to the advancement and empowerment of women, including to the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women. It continued to be deeply concerned about the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on all women and their families in the region and remained committed to achieving a two-State solution, on the basis of the parameters set out in the Council conclusions of July 2014, that met Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, ended the occupation that began in 1967 and resolved all permanent status issues in order to end the conflict.

36. The resolution addressed a range of important issues, on which the European Union had actively engaged in the context of the General Assembly. Italy had abstained from the vote because the country-specific issues covered in the resolution should be dealt with in that framework. The European Union had expressed that position repeatedly, both in the current forum and directly in contacts with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine. Italy therefore strongly encouraged the phasing out of the resolution within the foreseeable future and was ready to work constructively with the Observer Mission in that regard. A lack of concrete progress in that direction in the future would be detrimental to efforts to maintain cohesion.

Section C

Draft decision: Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its sixty-second session and provisional agenda and documentation for the sixty-third session of the Commission

37. *The draft decision was adopted.*

* The delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines subsequently informed the Council that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution, and the delegation of Denmark that it had intended to abstain.

38. **The President** proposed that the Council should take note of the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/73/38).

39. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 11: Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development (E/FFDF/2018/3)

Action on recommendations contained in chapter I of the report of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up (E/FFDF/2018/3)

40. **The President** proposed that the Council should transmit the agreed conclusions and recommendations contained in the report to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Council.

41. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 10: The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council

Agenda item 11: Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*) (A/73/81-E/2018/59)

42. **Mr. Zhu** (Director of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), speaking on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/73/81-E/2018/59). The report outlined the main findings of a recent survey conducted by the Department, in which United Nations system entities provided an overview of their efforts to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to mainstream the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development throughout the system. Through concrete examples of actions and initiatives implemented since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, which had helped to significantly advance the integration of the three dimensions throughout the system, the report demonstrated that such mainstreaming was essential to achieving the vision and aspirations of the Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

43. The findings suggested that system organizations were stepping up to the challenge of mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development by increasingly aligning their work programmes and priorities with the Goals. The initiatives outlined were encouraging steps in the right direction and deserved to be supported and nurtured so as to ensure enhanced system support for Member States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda. System organizations should also learn from each other by exchanging experiences and lessons learned, keeping in mind their respective mandates and comparative advantages.

44. Support to Member States was also geared towards an integrated approach reflecting the three dimensions of sustainable development, focusing on the nexus among the Goals. There was also a clear willingness to enhance collaboration with the United Nations system and with business and civil society stakeholders, the aim being to build on the comparative advantages of the United Nations family and focus on adding value to country-level efforts towards achieving the Goals.

45. Ultimately, mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development should be an integral part of the work programmes of United Nations entities and part of the DNA and culture of the system as it embodied the transformative nature of the Agenda. He hoped that, in 2019, instead of a description of what the system was doing, the report would provide an analysis of how the system was doing it, to further enhance the synergies and interlinkages among system entities in supporting Member States.

Action on the report of the Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/73/81-E/2018/59)

46. **The President** proposed that the Council should take note of the report.

47. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(f) Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (E/2018/49)

48. **Ms. Akselrod** (Assistant Director General for Non-communicable Diseases and Mental Health of the

World Health Organization (WHO)), introducing the report of the Director General of WHO on the United Nations inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (E/2018/49), recalled that the Task Force had been established by the Council in 2013 to coordinate relevant United Nations system activities and had some 40 United Nations agencies and other international organizations as members. According to the report, efforts to reach Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4 required the political commitments made previously at the General Assembly to be significantly scaled up. Countries also needed to make sound political choices, strengthen health systems, build national capacity, enhance international finance and prevent industry interference. The report provided a description of joint United Nations action in many countries and progress on global joint programmes to catalyse multisectoral action to prevent non-communicable diseases, carried out largely through funding from the Russian Federation. Other global joint programmes outlined included the prevention of cervical cancer, scaling up mobile technologies to address non-communicable diseases and reducing the harmful use of alcohol.

49. The report outlined the objectives of the new thematic working group established by the Task Force on tobacco control, as well as the activities of its working groups on scaling up action on nutrition, including ending childhood obesity; physical activity; mental health and well-being; environmental health risks and non-communicable diseases; emergencies; and non-communicable diseases in the workplace. According to the report, United Nations agencies needed to be bolder in the ways they responded to Member State requests to support national efforts to prevent and control non-communicable diseases.

50. In 2018–2019, the Task Force planned to step up efforts to support more United Nations country teams; demonstrate how United Nations agencies were responding to the recent report by the Secretary-General on repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda (A/72/684-E/2018/7); and scale up its efforts to mobilize resources to deliver action on the ground in line with Council resolution 2017/8 on the work of the Task Force, which called for a significant increase in financing for the United Nations system response on non-communicable diseases. Noting that 2018 was a critical year for non-communicable diseases, she encouraged the participation of heads of State and Government in the forthcoming third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, in order to maintain political leadership on non-communicable diseases, central to the achievement of the Goals.

51. She drew attention to two recent WHO reports. The first, "Saving lives, spending less: a strategic response to non-communicable diseases", published in May 2018, laid out the benefits of implementing the most cost-effective and feasible interventions to prevent and control non-communicable diseases, known as the "WHO Best Buys". The second, published on 1 June 2018 by the Independent High-Level Commission on Non-communicable Diseases, outlined 20 recommendations in six areas: political leadership and responsibility; prioritizing and scaling up action; reorienting health systems to include health promotion and prevention and control in universal health coverage policies and plans; collaboration and regulation; financing; and accountability. The Task Force was committed to supporting Members States in those six areas, going forward, in particular to catalyse financing for the development of national responses to non-communicable diseases and mental health.

52. Lastly, she drew attention to the recent report of the Secretary General on progress on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (A/72/662).

53. **Mr. Varganov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation was pleased with the progress made by the Task Force in coordinating the activities of institutions, programmes and funds of the United Nations, which provided assistance to States in fighting non-communicable diseases and in addressing the Sustainable Development Goals related to health. With requests by States increasing, his delegation agreed with the recommendations in the report with regard to the need to strengthen the technical and financial potential of the Task Force and to strengthen partnerships with Governments, civil society and the private sector.

54. Despite the efforts made, the fight against non-communicable diseases remained a topical issue and strengthening political commitments in that regard was of particular importance. The Russian Federation had shown that concrete results could be achieved through complex and coordinated measures on health at the political level. Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases had been strengthened and were among the national and global priorities key to the health programmes of his country, which actively used the experience and potential of WHO in the field and provided it with financial, technical and other support.

Such support included, in particular, a programme to provide assistance to several countries to develop policies for strengthening activities to fight such diseases, together with UNDP and WHO. In that context, his country had provided for investment projects for Kyrgyzstan and Belarus, as well as for United Nations visits to Uzbekistan, Zambia and the Philippines to collect initial information. In the coming months, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and the Islamic Republic of Iran would also be assessed. Moreover, WHO and UNDP had organized training programs for health specialists in Moscow and Geneva.

55. His delegation urged Member States to actively and constructively participate in the high-level meeting on non-communicable diseases in September and hoped that the outcome would lead to further strengthening of international efforts.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.